

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 and 13-19 and 22 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 11 and 22 are independent. By this reply, claims 20-21 have been cancelled and claims 1, 2, 6, 11, 13 and 22 have been amended.

Interview Conducted

Applicants appreciate the Examiner for the personal interview conducted on August 8, 2006 and for the Interview Summary. During the interview, Applicants proposed to amend independent claims 1, 11 and 22 as amended by the present Amendment. The Examiner agreed that such amendments would overcome the §112, second paragraph, rejection and the §103 rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 over the combination of Takahashi et al. and the secondary reference(s).

35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph Rejection

Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. This claim, as currently amended, overcomes the rejection, as agreed by the Examiner during the interview. Accordingly, the rejection should be withdrawn.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-4, 6-11 and 13-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,966,473) and Syeda-Mahmood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,941). Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being npatentable over the combination of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,966,473) and Syeda-Mahmood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,941), further in view of Saitoh (U.S. Patent No. 5,220,621). Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being npatentable over the combination of Satoshi et al. (EP Patent No. 0851382) and Syeda-Mahmood et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,621,941). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Regarding the rejection of independent claims 1 and 11 and their dependent claims over Takahashi et al. combined with the secondary reference(s), the Examiner agreed during the interview that the present amendments to independent claims 1 and 11 would overcome the rejection. Thus, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Regarding the rejection of independent claim 22, similar to Takahashi et al, Satoshi also scans blank forms to determine the structures of ruled lines and the positions of titles and stores such form information in a layout dictionary 31 so that when the actual filled-out forms (with titles) are presented, the system can know the position of the title and the format of the form. That is, Satoshi fails to teach or suggest, *inter alia*, "manually designating an arbitrary point P in a predetermined area of the scanned document, if a type of the scanned document is not known; identifying a box around the arbitrary point P of the scanned document; storing, in a database connected to the computer, characterization data of the identified box of the scanned document, such that boxes in next documents of a same type can be identified automatically without designation of an arbitrary point P on the next documents", as recited in claim 22.

Regarding Fig. 2B of Satoshi, a word "TITLE" is indicated in Document A in the 'Learning Form' operation just to show where a title will be positioned in subsequently entered filled-out forms. In the Learning Form operation of Satoshi, the entire layout (e.g., lines, boxes, etc.) of a blank form are learned and the learned form information is then stored for different forms in the dictionary 31 for comparison with the actually filled-out forms. The Learning Form operation of Satoshi to determine the ruled line structures and the positions of the title is complicated and involves complex mathematical equations and algorithms as shown in Fig. 6 and on page 7, lines 15-48, and Figs. 9-22 of Satoshi. Thus, in Fig. 2B, Satoshi does not use the filled-out forms in the Learning Form operation since that would complicate or render inoperative Satoshi's Learning Form operation and even the subsequent comparison and matching operation.

Also, in another embodiment as Fig. 23 of Satoshi, a form 71 is scanned in an automatic mode. When the system does not recognize the form even after searching and comparing with form information stored in a plurality of user dictionaries 73, then an intra-table management information extracting process is performed. This results in a number of candidates and the user

can select one of the candidates and the selected candidate (e.g., the selected title position for forms) is used and stored in the dictionaries 73. That is, Satoshi's automatic mode is complicated since it tries to find the title position and apparently since one cannot be sure that this automatic mode works in all occasions, the user has to confirm it by selecting the appropriate candidate. In contrast, Applicants' invention is much simpler. In Applicants' invention, the cell/box that is pointed to always contains the title and thus, the correct title position is recognized always in all occasions.

Comparing Satoshi with Applicants' invention, there are many patentable distinctions, e.g., the way the cell/box containing the title is determined. In Satoshi, the whole structure of the table needs to be mapped out first, and then the user points on a screen to the character string and next the position information of the rectangular cell containing the pointed position is stored; see, e.g., page 7, lines 45-48. Thus, in Satoshi, the entire structure of the whole table has to be mapped out previously. In contrast, according to Applicants' invention, only the box around the pointed position P is searched for and the prior mapping operation for the entire table/document is not needed. Thus, Applicants' invention is simple, effective and user-friendly over the prior systems.

Accordingly, independent claims 1, 11 and 22 and their dependent claims (due to the dependency) are patentable over the applied references, and the rejections are improper and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final, in that it raises no new issues but merely places the claims in a form more clearly patentable over the references of record. In the alternative, the Examiner is respectfully requested to enter this Amendment After Final in that it reduces the issues for appeal.

Application No. 09/813,955
Amendment dated October 5, 2006
After Final Office Action of April 5, 2006

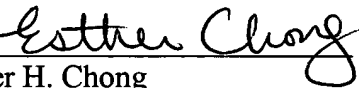
Docket No.: 0142-0353P

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: October 5, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Esther H. Chong

Registration No.: 40,953

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant